

Field Health and Safety Procedures

These procedures are recommended for use by staff to provide them with health and safety guidance when performing field activities. Since field activities will vary based upon operation type, hazards associated with the facility or site, and activities performed at the site it is always the employee's responsibility to ensure their safety. These guidelines are intended to provide and establish minimal practices for all field personnel and serve as a reference and a constant reminder of the need to work safely. The following items should always be considered when performing field activities:

This information has been summarized from the CIWMB Field Health and Safety Manual. The full manual can be viewed at the Boards Website: <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Safety/Manual/>

HEALTH AND SAFETY PLANNING

- Always become familiar with the facility or site prior to the field activity to determine what hazards may exist on site. (Familiarity may be accomplished through studying site operation plans, layout maps and past inspection reports).
- Staff should ensure that all necessary equipment is calibrated and in good working condition before beginning any job. If heavy equipment will be on-site, make sure it is ready to go (i.e. water truck should have water).
- Whenever possible, identify potentially hazardous environments or conditions that may be present at the time of the proposed site visit. Staff should visually survey the landscape.
- Organize and prepare all health and safety equipment prior to performing any field activity. Be sure you discuss any equipment needs with health and safety program staff well in advance of your trip.
- When a hazardous environment or condition exists, the "buddy system" should be required for all field activities.
- When the site assessment and knowledge of site hazards indicates little or no potential employee exposure exists use of the "buddy system" is not required.
- Plan inspections or other field activities that allow for rest and water breaks.
- Plan your field activities to accommodate adverse weather conditions and select appropriate clothing and equipment. Staff should check with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) national weather service prior to departure.

- Schedule summer field activities early to avoid the hottest part of the day. Carry water with you and know the symptoms of heat stress.
- Avoid heat stroke by limiting time spent in direct sunlight while wearing protective equipment. Conversely, take the time to plan for winter or wet weather activities where the potential to cold injury (hypothermia or frostbite) may exist.
- Use extra caution when wet weather field activities may pose unusual hazards ranging from slips, trips, and falls.
- Select Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) based on the hazards, which could be encountered during the site visit. Consult with the Health and Safety Officer and/or qualified program staff to assist in identifying and evaluating site hazards and selecting appropriate PPE.
- Monitoring instrumentation should be used when hazardous or toxic contaminants are known or suspected.
- Employee exposure monitoring is recommended when potentially hazardous or toxic contaminants are known or suspected.

DECONTAMINATION

Decontamination is the process of removing or neutralizing contaminants that have accumulated on personnel or equipment. The most effective means of decontamination is to limit the amount of equipment requiring decontamination.

- Use disposable equipment and supplies whenever possible.
- Seal all non-reusable contaminated materials generated during the field activity including disposable gloves, coveralls, and used toweling in plastic bags and dispose of them on-site. Avoid bringing contaminated materials back with you.
- Decontaminate all soiled boots and other reusable equipment (including soiled vehicles) on site, if possible. If this cannot be done, soiled equipment should be sealed in plastic bags until decontaminated. Soiled equipment and car exteriors can be cleaned at a car wash. ***If equipment or vehicles become contaminated with hazardous or toxic wastes, contact the Health & Safety Program staff immediately. Do not expose yourself and others to unnecessary risk. Remember, you can't see contamination!***
- When decontaminating in the field, use proper personal protection such as gloves, goggles, and dust mask.

- Under no circumstances should contaminated equipment be brought back to the office or taken home.
- Do not attempt to launder contaminated clothing at home as you may contaminate other articles of clothing.
- Limited field decontamination may be performed using a hand-pumped garden sprayer filled with laboratory grade soap solution and the other with clean water for rinsing.
- Store all clean field equipment in sealed plastic bags until used.
- Wash hands after removing PPE

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Field activities can present a number of hazards. Use of personal protective equipment is required when performing certain tasks associated with field activities. No single combination of protective equipment and clothing is capable of protecting against all hazards. PPE should be used in conjunction with other protective methods. All field staff should follow proper procedure and wear the required personal protection to ensure their safety and those working around them. For safe use of personal protective devices, employees should be properly instructed in selection, use, and maintenance. Questions regarding equipment should be discussed with health and safety program staff prior to the field activity. Health and safety staff can make recommendations on a case by case basis.

Eye Protection

Eye protection should be worn whenever there is danger of mechanical, biological or chemical injury to the eyes. Occupational safety eyewear provided to employees should meet or exceed ANSI Z87.1 standards.

Hand Protection

To prevent toxic or irritating substances from coming into contact with the skin, adequate hand protection should be used. Glove selection should be made based on chemical compatibility.

Body Protection

To reduce the risk of injury, field staff should wear appropriate body protection. The following items should be available: chemical resistant clothing, disposable clothing, and rain suit.

Head Protection

To protect the wearer's head from impact and penetration of falling objects, hard hats should be used for protection.

Foot Protection

To protect the foot against rolling objects and against the hazard of accidentally kicking or stepping on sharp objects adequate foot protection should be used. Foot protection should as a minimum include steel toed and/or steel mid sole (optional) impermeable boot.

Special Clothing

High visibility clothing, Department of Transportation (DOT) orange safety vests, should be provided for field staff that is exposed to traffic hazards.

Hearing Protection

Whenever noise levels are suspected to exceed 85 decibels (dBA), hearing protection should be used. Hearing protection provided should consist of earplugs or earmuffs.

Respiratory Protection

To protect against airborne contaminants use of respiratory protection may be required. Information on respiratory protection and CIWMB's Respiratory Protection Program may be found in the Health and Safety Manual at the CIWMB Website:

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Safety/Manual/>